Name of Provider: Institute of Contemporary Music Performance
UKPRN: 10035638

TEF Year Four Provider Submission

1. Executive Summary

This provider submission is a welcome opportunity for ICMP to give the necessary context, analysis and commentary in relation to our TEF Year Four metrics. With a full three-year dataset available to us for the first time our trajectory is now clear. While our metrics and flags point initially to a bronze award, our story is one of ambition and demonstrable improvement over time, with historic rather than current data now being the dominant limiting factor. This submission therefore provides further detail and context that will support the TEF panel in making their judgements in relation to the final outcome.

The headline analysis can be summarised as follows:

- We are consistently meeting benchmark in continuation and employability metrics, and increasingly excelling in supporting our students entering highly skilled employment or further study [see sections 2.1, 5.1 and 5.2]
- Our metrics demonstrate a clear trajectory over three years across almost all areas with exceptional improvement in some [see sections 2.2, 3.1, 3.4, 4.3 and 5.1]
- We are maintaining our good outcomes for students [see section 5.1]
- Our support mechanisms and interventions are clearly having a positive impact on higher risk groups, evidenced in some key split metrics [see section 4.3]
- We have demonstrated our ability, through our data and review systems, to effectively identify areas of under-performance and make targeted interventions that affect positive change quickly, as attested by the three-year pattern of improvement across all TEF metrics [see sections 2.2, 3.1 and 3.4]
- Our actions are informed by our ability to listen to students and to respond quickly to their shifting needs, and the embedded Student Voice mechanisms we have established and continue to develop [see section 2.4]
- We have been, over a long period of time, pro-actively engaged with the sector and regulatory environment and we are proud of our consistently strong performance against regulatory requirements and external scrutiny [see sections 2.1, 2.2, 3.2]
- We have developed strong governance, management, quality assurance and improvement planning models that allow us to effectively reflect and act on our performance [see section 2.2]
- We have invested heavily in specialist resources, both physical and digital, to ensure students are suitably equipped to succeed on their programmes and beyond [see section 4.1]
- We continue to invest in the development of our teaching teams and the scholarly environment [see sections 3.2 and 4.2]
- We offer a vibrant experience to students with a sharp focus on a personalised approach built around their individual ambitions and interests [see sections 3.1, 3.3 and 4.3]

We also recognise that there is further work to be done. We have therefore put highly-focused improvement plans in place to address the identified areas for development, specifically as follows:

- There are unresolved aspects of our performance in specific areas of student satisfaction that are now well understood and receiving attention from across the institution [see section 3.1]
- We are continuing to develop our provision, review our programmes and improve our academic support to minimise non-continuation and to allow us to move above benchmark [see sections 3.3 and 4.3]

2. Provider Context

2.1. Our vision and mission

"The most important thing I've learned is the confidence to get out there and do it. I've wanted to be in a band my whole life, and without ICMP I'd never have done it" (ICMP student and singer with the band Stay Club)

"Without ICMP none of us would have met. We're all from different cultural backgrounds and ICMP has allowed us to explore different genres and styles. We're an international band" (ICMP student and bass player with the band Stay Club)

These comments from members of up and coming London-based band *Stay Club* epitomise ICMP's transformational capabilities. As a small and specialist provider of vocational undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in popular music performance, production, songwriting and business, we provide our students with the programmes of study they require to achieve their individual aspirations in an environment that fosters collaboration, networking and real-life interaction with industry.

Our vision to *shape the future of music* is achieved by producing highly skilled, highly motivated, successful graduates who leave ICMP industry-ready and go on to sustain lifelong careers in the music and creative industries. We know that within 6 months of graduating, 96% of our graduates are in employment or further education; around two-thirds are engaged in music-related jobs or study; 84% are in highly skilled employment or further study; and the average salary of ICMP graduates is 26% above the average for UK music graduates.[1] Our graduates are at the forefront of the contemporary music industry, regularly gracing festival stages, playing in the West End, working in studios, teaching the next generation of musicians, and, increasingly, becoming the entrepreneurs behind emerging trends in music creation, production and dissemination. Examples of renowned ICMP alumni include Ed O'Brien, Radiohead guitarist; Sandy Beales, One Direction bassist; Fraser T. Smith, award winning songwriter, engineer and guitarist who has produced albums and songs from Adele, Sam Smith and Stormzy; Luke Patterson, founder member and drummer with immensely successful band Clean Bandit; and Arnie Arnason, bass player for The Vaccines.

Our mission is to *inspire, encourage and equip our students to succeed by delivering a relevant and innovative educational experience of the highest quality.* With over 30 years experience in the design and delivery of industry-informed programmes, ICMP has emerged from being a pioneer of contemporary music education to an established and respected OfS-registered HE provider. We are well-connected and widely engaged in the HE political and regulatory environment, often as advocates of the non-traditional sector. Although we do not yet have our own degree awarding powers, our longstanding relationship with our primary validating partner (University of East London), has bestowed on us great depth of experience and capability. We operate effectively as an independent and autonomous institution, with enhancement and continuous improvement deeply embedded in our operating philosophy.

First and foremost, ICMP is a student-centric institution putting the needs and voice of the student at the heart of everything we do, and underpinned by the relentless pursuit to provide our students with the best possible experience and preparation for the future.

2.2. Our governance and quality assurance

Following a successful HER in 2015, and subsequent QAA EO scrutiny (rated as 'commendable' in 2018), ICMP has established a well-developed and highly capable governance model with an Academic Board and Corporate Board, both with significant external representation, the appropriate sub-committees, and a carefully considered governance code of practice. Crucially, we have deeply embedded student representation throughout our governance structures and processes, with the Student President attending Academic Board. An Executive Committee oversees the day-to-day operation of the organization and an increasingly comprehensive Registry function maintains the

[1] DLHE 2018

data and systems required to track the student journey and inform quality improvement planning. ICMP commissioned an external review of its governance effectiveness in January 2018. The review found ICMP's model to be 'a rigorous and effective system of governance'[2] and commendations included the effective use of KPIs to inform and affect change. Recommendations from the review have already been implemented to further enhance our processes.

ICMP's quality assurance processes continue to sit at the heart of our improvement agenda. For example, each programme Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), begins with a significant set of data focused on student feedback, outcomes and external examiner reporting, and is completed and peer-reviewed within two months of the end of each academic year. This allows module and programme improvement plans to be agreed and implemented from the start of the subsequent academic year. Themes are drawn together through an annual institutional self-evaluation document (SED) and a quality improvement plan (QIP) is then implemented. Real-time student engagement data such as attendance in class and at events, library usage, and VLE engagement also enables interventions to be made, and in-year module evaluations allow us to identify and quickly remedy student satisfaction concerns. This has allowed us to ensure that, in the academic year 2017-18, of a total of 84 modules delivered, 76% of modules achieved our internal expectations for module satisfaction, 20% fell marginally short and are subject to module improvement planning, and just 2 modules failed to meet the students' expectations.

It is these processes that have achieved the gains made in the TEF metrics over three years, observed most keenly in our 24-point gain for *assessment and feedback,* our 19-point gain for *highly skilled employment*, and our 9-point gain for *academic support.* Addressing the stalling of our TEF metric for *the teaching on my course,* following an initial 8-point improvement is now a priority and one we are confident of achieving within the next academic cycle. Our ability to identify weaknesses, make targeted interventions and affect change has been repeatedly recognised through QAA scrutiny:

"ICMP has made commendable progress with the implementation of its action plan. It has a thorough and evidence-based approach to the maintenance of academic standards and the enhancement of the student experience. This is demonstrated by the now well-embedded quality cycle. A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is fully integrated into the overall institutional strategy. ICMP has addressed targets robustly and dynamically, basing actions on internal and external review outcomes. The institution's commitment to exceeding expectations in fulfilling its action plan has resulted in many positive impacts." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

2.3. Our student community

ICMP is home to a total student population of almost 1000 (TEF population 755), enrolled on a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that represent the full eco-system of the contemporary music world. Our programmes are validated primarily by the University of East London (UEL), with a smaller part of our provision validated by the University of South Wales (USW) and an HNC accredited by Pearson. Our course portfolio for the academic year 2017-18 comprised:

- HNC Music Performance
- BMus(Hons) Popular Music Performance
- BA(Hons) Music Business
- CertHE/BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship
- CertHE/BA(Hons) Songwriting
- CertHE/BA(Hons) Creative Music Production
- MMus Popular Music Performance
- MA Songwriting

A distinctive feature of ICMP's student population is its international element and we continue to attract a diverse community. 68% of the student community (TEF population) are UK domiciled

[2] External review of the effectiveness of governance arrangement at ICMP, February 2018.

compared with an 84% UK average for full-time undergraduate programmes. 43% of students are classified as local, 10% of students are non-EU and 23% of students are EU domiciled.

Of our 2017/18 cohort 24% of UK domiciled students were BAME compared to a 22% average nationally (HESA 2016/17). In terms of disability, 133 students (13%) declared a disability on entry in 2017/18, with more declaring disability during the student journey. In practice around 19% of students have declared a disability. This compares with 12% for UK undergraduate programmes in the UK (HESA 2016/17). The average age of our students is also slightly older at 22 years with 37% of the total student population over 21, and of the 470 new starters in the 2017-18 academic year, 251 (53%) were 21 or over.

ICMP is proud of its global reach and diverse student community, which is representative of the industry we promote, and we work hard to establish a cohesive and inclusive international community. This was recently recognized and commended during our UEL Collaborative Review with the report noting 'the strong sense of community between staff and student, including international students'.[3] The strength of our community is equally evidenced in our 2018 NSS data with 74% of our student reporting that they *feel part of a community of staff and students.* This is 5 percentage points above the national average and 9 points ahead of our benchmark.

2.4. Our students' voice

The views, ideas and voice of our student community are highly valued at ICMP. Students are valued as members of the academic community on a par with faculty and are expected to make meaningful contributions to our institutional development and strategic direction.

We have a well-developed system of student representation with an elected Student President and Vice-President, both of whom meet with a member of the senior management team on a monthly basis enabling managers to respond quickly to student feedback.

The Student President chairs the Student Senate, comprising representatives from every year and every strand of every programme. Students also have representation on key committees including Programme Committees, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, and the Academic Board. Feedback from students is also captured and managed through a high-profile student voice mechanism branded as '*Your Voice, Your ICMP',* which has proved to be highly effective in delivering improvements and guiding investment into the learning environment. Meaningful developments to programme design and content have also been instigated by student feedback. Recent examples include:

- Minor and major amendments to modules that have resulted in improving internal module satisfaction data, including the removal/modification of assessment elements that failed to sufficiently engage students
- Investment in additional one-to-one tutorials for modules requiring high levels of independent study
- Improvements made to the content and delivery of a level 6 Instrumental and Vocal Teaching module, which saw internal module satisfaction data jump from 34% to 89% and led to the validation of a replacement level 6 Music in Education module which is maintaining the high levels of satisfaction.
- The building of a new recording studio with a large format console, and a new post production studio
- The doubling in the physical footprint of our library resource, and significant investment in library catalogue and self-service software, and subject specialist human resources

The quality of our student voice systems is recognized by our students in their 2018 NSS feedback. 84% report that they had the right opportunities to provide feedback on their course, 6 points ahead

[3] UEL Collaborative Review Report, 2017

of benchmark, and we are in keeping with the NSS national average overall for student voice. QAA have also recognized our strength in this area:

"ICMP has an effective system of student representation. Each programme has student representatives who sit on Programme Committees and consider AQIs, AMRs and external examiner reports and students are represented by the Student President and Vice President on appropriate institutional operational committees … ICMP operates an open-door policy with staff regularly accessible to students, which enables issues to be discussed informally and resolved effectively. Students commented very positively about their views being valued and acted upon." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

3. Teaching Quality

3.1. Student Engagement (TQ1)

At the heart of our approach to student engagement is a continuing commitment to small class sizes and high contact hours, which affords us the best opportunity to know our students, understand their needs, and offer a personalised student experience. 50% of total class time is delivered in groups of no more than 15 students; 28% in groups of 15-30; only 12% in large groups of up to but never exceeding 60; and 10% is delivered as one to one instrumental tuition, tutorials or project supervision. Contact hours vary slightly between programmes and semesters, but students are typically timetabled for 16 hours per week at level 4, 14 hours at level 5, and 12 hours at level 6. This compares with an overall average for the sector of 12 hours per week.[4] We also believe that with a tuition fee in 2017-18 of just £6,700, this represents excellent value for money in comparison to the sector more broadly.

Teaching quality at ICMP is predominantly governed by our institutionally agreed *Attributes of the ICMP Teacher* - a set of characteristics drawn up through consultation with students and faculty. These attributes are mapped to the HEA Professional Standards Framework and used as the key vehicle for the recruitment, induction, training and monitoring of teaching standards. All tutors are required to demonstrate competence against the *Attributes* through a robust annual Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL) scheme, and this has helped, since its introduction in 2016, to develop and maintain a standard of teaching that ensures the appropriate engagement, stimulation and challenge of our students.[5]

We believe the improvement made in our NSS data is at least in part attributable to the implementation of the *Attributes* and the associated Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. 2018 NSS data reports that 88% of *staff are good at explaining things,* an improvement of 12 points since 2016, and we have made an impressive 20-point gain to 81% of students reporting that '*the tutors have made the subject interesting'.*

"ICMP's aspirational Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides for activities that systematically enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

We recognize that we have made insufficient progress on questions 3 and 4 of the NSS (*the course is intellectually stimulating; my course has challenged me to achieve my best work),* and this is the root limiting cause for our first TEF metric not yet meeting or exceeding benchmark. Through detailed discussion and analysis with students and staff, our under-performance here is now well understood, and we are confident that there are no systemic flaws in our provision that are limiting our success in these areas. Rather, our students have not been sufficiently connecting their creative, technical or professional practice with their own understanding of 'intellectual' endeavour and this has been suppressing our NSS scores. Similarly, the concept of 'best work' within the creative field has been understood by our students to be a distant aspiration. We are now working hard to help our students better understand how the modules they take are inextricably linked to their own intellectual

[4] HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2018.
[5] Attributes include thematically grouped characteristics around industry credibility, specialist knowledge/skills; commitment; scholarly approach; practice-based and research-informed teaching; sound pedagogic knowledge.

development and supporting them in achieving their creative and technical goals. We have seen an 9-point improvement in this area over our 3 years in the NSS, but are committed to improving this further.

Alongside the formal programmes of study ICMP has a long tradition of holding masterclasses, clinics and workshops with inspirational musicians, performers, artists and music entrepreneurs. During semester time these take place most weeks with up to 25 scheduled each academic year, providing opportunities to learn from those who have achieved success and forming an invaluable complement to the students' study. The masterclasses are carefully curated to ensure that that they are relevant to programmes of study and are well attended, with around 500 students per year accessing them. Recent masterclasses include Chad Smith (Red Hot Chilli Peppers), Luke Patterson (Clean Bandit), Howard Jones, Guthrie Govan, Paul Turner & Rob Harris (Jamiroquai). Feedback from these events is gathered and analysed to monitor their impact. Data collated over the last 3 years shows 96% of attendees find them useful; 93% report that the content impacted on specific subject knowledge; and 98% report that they are relevant to their programme of study.

"Inspirational! The in-depth advice he gave opened my eyes to a different perspective on my instrument". (Student feedback following Guthrie Govan masterclass)

Beyond the masterclass series ICMP has a dedicated Events Team curating and hosting a wide range of additional opportunities for students. These include our established Songwriters' Circle, a monthly event based on a model imported from Nashville that combines songwriting students' performances with high-profile guests including recent appearances by Frank Turner, Bruno Major, Ed Harcourt and Ben Earle of The Shires. These monthly events are attended by up to 200 students. Other ICMP-hosted events include open mikes, jam nights, bandeoke, end of term showcases, social events, careers events, and networking events. The additional inclusion of student-led events means that there are opportunities for students to perform, attend gigs, socialize and network almost every day and night of the in-semester year. This is again represented in our secure sector average 2018 NSS performance (78%) against *learning community* and the *opportunities to work with other students.*

3.2. Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

The aforementioned *Attributes* and OTL process is central to our faculty development agenda, and a culture of transparent classroom observation is a valued and constructive aspect of ICMP life. At the individual tutor level, the OTL scheme assesses the quality of teaching and learning against the performance indicators allowing us to simultaneously identify areas of strength and where a tutor may demonstrate a deficit in a particular area. Areas of strength are recorded on a central 'Experts Directory' of tutor skills and best practice. Any identified skills deficit triggers our parallel Peer Observation process. This process allows us to quickly match faculty expertise with tutor deficit and, through a personalised plan of peer observation and guidance, supports tutors in developing competence against the performance indicators. Improvement against identified deficit then forms the focus of the next OTL, thus closing the loop or, in cases where improvement is not sufficiently apparent, informing performance management measures whereby a robust programme of targets and OTLs will be drawn up by the line manager.

At the macro-level an annual OTL report analyses themes emerging from the OTL process that can feed directly into CPD planning. In the academic 2017-18 46% of tutors were identified as sufficiently meeting the *Attributes,* 44% were identified as benefitting from support in one or more areas of the *Attributes,* and 10% were identified as being a cause for concern and, ultimately, have been removed from core teaching. The identified weaknesses have formed the basis of our annual LTA Conference and Tutor Development Programme, delivered by high-performing tutors, and drawing on their expertise to share good practice.

Qualitative comments in our 2018 NSS and in our own internal module satisfaction regularly point to the quality of the tutors as having the greatest impact on the student experience:

"The teachers are legends! They are motivating, challenging, supportive, and passionate in what they do and how they teach" (ICMP student feedback)

"The students say that the teaching is excellent and that they would definitely recommend their programme. External examiners also commented on the high standards of teaching by enthusiastic tutors." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

Central to achieving this is the constitution of our teaching faculty. A defining characteristic of the faculty is the 'dual professional' status of most of our tutors. We know that students value the experience of professional practitioners in the classroom[6] and of the 91 staff on our 2017-18 faculty 90% are in fractional or hourly paid posts,[7] allowing their work as educators to co-exist with their work in industry. Notable tutors include Jon Shone (bass player and Musical Director for One Direction), Bill Laurence (keyboardist for Grammy Award winning band, Snarky Puppy), Maurizio Malagnini (film and television music composer) and Audrey Riley (arranger, composer and cellist who has collaborated with Coldplay, Muse and Spandau Ballet).

"'The teachers are great. The fact they all have relevant industry experience means you are getting more than just music tuition, you're learning about the business; they're legends" (songwriting graduate and founder member of successful indie band 'Daughter')

The dual professional status of our tutors is attested by their credibility as educators. 31% of faculty are Fellows or Senior Fellows of the HEA, an increase from 22% at the same point last year. There is an ongoing programme of support for applications, prioritising those in substantive or programme leader roles (all but one of whom are now accredited by the HEA). 55% of the faculty have a teaching qualification, which compares well with the average of 45% for the performing arts across the HE sector.[8] 56% of the faculty also hold a post-graduate qualification and a smaller number (7%) hold a doctorate. We believe this profile is in keeping with maintaining an industry practitioner core to our faculty, alongside the requisite academic expertise and teaching capability. An ongoing programme of HEA accreditation is underway in academic year 18-19 including applications for Principal Fellow. ICMP also encourages tutors to engage in additional professional activity, including external examining and review of other institutions, attendance at conferences, seminars and engagement in professional practice, research and scholarly practice. Furthermore, our institutional recognition of excellent teaching is reflected in the opportunity for tutors to make progress against a payspine that is aligned with their developing professional and academic profiles. This continued investment in our teaching faculty and CPD is embedded at the core of the LTA strategy, and our 'excellent staff development processes'[9] were recently commended during our Collaborative Arrangement Review with the University of South Wales.

"There is a comprehensive continuous personal development framework which ensures that staff are qualified, supported and developed." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

3.3. Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

The design of ICMP courses is based on essential principles of scaffolding the students' academic, knowledge and skills development, within the overarching frame of industry relevance and preparation for employment. Many of our students do not naturally identify as 'academic' upon enrolment. This misconception is challenged from the start of their studies through a combination of the tutorial curriculum content and a progressive series of common modules embedded across our

[6] See HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2017.
[7] This does not impact on continuity; these contracts service the needs of the tutors well (they need flexibility in their careers); around 60% of hourly paid staff and over 90% of the core education team have been with us more than 2 years.
[8] HESA/HEA (2016) *Report to HEFCE on Research and Data Analysis on Academic Teaching Qualifications.* HEFCE.
[9] USW Institutional Re-Approval Report, 2018

programmes.[10] These modules are in part built upon UEL's Skills Curriculum,[11] and partly upon our own recognition of the knowledge, understanding and skills that aid students in achieving their full potential. The common modules form the heart of the UEL validated programmes, ensuring all students are subject to a core curriculum that provides the requisite academic rigour and stretch around which the programme-specific content is designed. We consider the outcomes in terms of degree classification and ultimately our high levels of employability (especially highly skilled employment) demonstrate the success in the application of these principles.

Our academic portfolio is subject to annual review in relation to its academic, professional and industry relevance, and where substantive issues are identified, or where a programme is nearing the end of its natural life-cycle (typically 4-5 years), an individual programme will be subject to a full programme review. An example of this was the identification of BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship comparatively underperforming in the 2017 NSS. The programme review took place in May 2018, including scrutiny of all available internal and external datasets, external representation, industry liaison, and the student voice, and has resulted in the upcoming re-validation of the programme.

The revalidation process itself is an extensive iterative process shared between a dedicated programme development team, the Academic Board and Executive Committee for academic and business case approval, and the relevant academic committees to ensure academic standards and quality. The Academic Standards and Quality Committee sense-checks and approves the final set of documentation to be filed with the validating partners, after which the process is essentially repeated according to the collaborative partners' validation process. This parallel process of internal checks and external scrutiny by our collaborative partners gives us exceptional confidence in the academic rigour of our programmes, as repeatedly attested in feedback from validation and collaborative review panels. For instance, a recently validated BA(Hons) Music Business and Entrepreneurship programme (first delivery 2019) was noted for:

- *the strong academic and professional support provided by ICMP;*
- *the emphasis on authentic assessment and closely replicating the nature of working in the profession, allowing students to mirror their future career in a supportive environment whilst studying;*
- *the commitment to ensuring currency of resources, due to the rapid changes within the industry;*
- *the range of non-traditional assessment across the programme, reflecting real-life practice;*
- *the high-quality and robust validation paperwork*
  (UEL Validation Report, July 2018)

Our external examiners, who have a key remit for the scrutiny of academic rigour and challenge, also attest the efficacy of our programmes in maintaining appropriately high standards:

"The BA Creative Musicianship programme at the ICMP is constructed so that students are given space to push the boundaries of their own creativity, which is often done by setting limitations. Students are guided through the process of thinking through ways of solving the problems that these limitations cause, thus pushing through their creative boundaries." (BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship External Examiner Report, 2017-18)

"The courses are well designed and the shifts in focus between modules i.e. theory vs composition, practice vs performance, creativity vs application, act as productive ways for students to interrogate their own assumptions about what it is they are doing. It is also apparent that concepts, themes and skills established are developed across levels." (BA(Hons) Songwriting External Examiner Report 2017-18)

3.4. Feedback (TQ4)

Assessment and feedback has been a significant area of development over the last 3 years and our rapid improvement is represented in our three years of TEF metrics for assessment and feedback. Our Year 3 metric is now just -3.1 behind benchmark with no flags, from a position of -28.9 behind

[10] The common modules apply only to those programmes validated by UEL.
[11] UEL's Skills Curriculum consists of learning outcomes for three skillsets: learning, professional, and research skills.

benchmark in our Year 1 metric. We are very proud of this progress and the impact it is having on our students.

Part of achieving this turnaround was a full review of assessment processes and practices instigated in academic year 2016-17, resulting in a revision of feedback documentation, moderation processes, our tutor training in assessment practice, and the introduction of an *ICMP Assessment Pack* that supports module leaders in the design, implementation and management of assessment. Improvements include:

- smarter assessment design that more clearly relates module outcomes to the students' needs through real-life contexts and tasks
- better guidance to students at the point of assignment briefing
- greater clarity in the assessment criteria and how they are mapped to module outcomes
- a newly designed feedback pro-forma that guides tutors in giving meaningful feedback that helps students improve their performance
- module team training in the implementation of assessment and providing high quality feedback
- improved moderation processes and documentation that focus on the quality of feedback alongside the accuracy of grading

Our approach to addressing our former weaknesses in this area provides a solid case study on our rapid improvement capabilities and is evidenced in our NSS data with a 20 percentage point gain over three years for *the criteria used in marking have been clear in advance,* a 22-point gain for *marking and assessment has been fair*, and an impressive 38-point gain for *feedback on my work has been timely.* We are now in keeping with the national average NSS scores for assessment and feedback and exceeding the average for timely feedback. Alongside the positive student feedback, the quality and rigour of our assessment processes is a regular theme in external examiner reports and other external scrutiny.

"The assessment methods were found to be fair, robust and rigorous. The opportunity for students to perform in a genuine venue creates a situational assessment that is entirely appropriate for this subject area" (BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship External Examiner Report, 2018)

"I have been extremely impressed by the programme team's commitment to improving the delivery of their courses and in ensuring consistency and fairness in marking and moderation" (BA(Hons) Songwriting External Examiner Report, 2018)

"Tutor feedback is thorough and detailed and appropriate attention is given to discussing the strengths and weaknesses of student work. The comments for improving the work are helpful and supportive of student potential." (BMus(Hons) Popular Music Performance External Examiner Report, 2018)

"ICMP consistently and transparently applies the processes detailed in its Assessment Pack. There is full training in assessment methods and grading for staff. External examiners confirm that the ICMP teaching team applies rigorous assessment methods across the curriculum, aided by standardised rubrics, and makes excellent use of the VLE. Robust standards are reinforced by very rigorous internal moderation processes. Students show their assessment satisfaction through the NSS, focus groups and module feedback. They are very complimentary about the constructive and timely feedback they receive." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

4. Learning Environment

4.1. Resources (LE1)

Developments in our learning environment have been dominated over the last year by the first phase of an extensive campus design, build and development project. This has seen ICMP consolidate its physical resource into a single extended building and a £1.2m investment in this first phase, with a further two years of investment in plan. This constitutes approximately 20% of ICMP's annual turnover and is in addition to the £1.4m invested in specialist music equipment and infrastructure, both physical and digital, over the last 4 years.

The design of our new facility was created in consultation with the student community, and it brings together, under one roof, our range of specialist industry standard physical spaces, study space and social space:

- 7 fully sound-proofed live performance/rehearsal room
- a total of 23 practice spaces
- 3 state-of-the-art recording studios
- 3 production suites
- 7 technology labs with up to 30 computer workstations
- a dedicated library and learning resources centre
- a suite of teaching and seminar rooms
- meeting/writing rooms
- facilities helpdesk and equipment hire
- a buskers' area
- social, study and collaborative/creative space on each floor of the building

State of the art specialist equipment is made freely and readily available to all students for use both on and off-site, managed by a dedicated Facilities Team who also service the physical spaces and support students in using the facility. At our busiest period our team are loaning up to 2,000 items of equipment a week. Our site is open 7 days per week until 11pm on weekdays and 10pm at the weekend. Outside of timetabled classes, we make all rooms freely available to students for personal practice and collaborative projects.

Improving the library resource has a key part of our campus re-development project, as this was an area of development identified through student feedback and our NSS scores over 3 years. This has resulted in:

- doubling the physical footprint of the library
- reviewing our core and recommended reading lists and ensuring all core texts are always available for students
- investing in new physical and digital stock
- investing in a new library catalogue and self-service system
- better promoting the vast digital services available to our students through our collaborative arrangements with our validating partners
- supporting students in accessing external library services through SCONUL, and public libraries, especially the British Library
- appointment of a subject specialist librarian to support students in accessing material

In line with student feedback, we have also housed all our student-facing teams in a dedicated academic support office with a single helpdesk for all student related matters whether academic, student services, wellbeing or otherwise.

We have an additional off-site physical resource at Tileyard Studios near Kings Cross. Tileyard is the largest professional music community in the UK, with more than 70 state-of-the-art music studios and 100 businesses that provide a home to a wide spectrum of companies working in music, film, television, fashion and creative new tech sectors. Artists with bases at Tileyard include Mark Ronson, Tynchy Stryder, The Prodigy, and Lily Allen. ICMP's partnership with Tileyard provides our students with unique opportunities to study in and engage with an immersive industry environment, building their networks amongst some of the music industry's biggest names. It connects the real world of the music industry directly to our educational provision, providing a range of bespoke opportunities for the development of their careers. These opportunities include major project workshops with Tileyard Music A&R; student access to regular Tileyard events including networking and performance opportunities; professional e-mentoring schemes; bespoke end-of-year live showcase events held at Tileyard; and access to state of the art studios, technology, writing rooms and other learning facilities.

"Students really enjoying having Tileyard available to them – it provides brilliant networking opportunities and has had a positive effect on student engagement." (Level 6 Student Representative)

In addition to the physical environment all programmes are comprehensively supported by our Virtual Learning Environment. In academic year 2017-18 we successfully transitioned from Moodle to Canvas with 77% of students rating Canvas positively, and 75% stating that tutors effectively embed Canvas into their learning. We recognise that there is still work to be done as we further explore its capabilities. Since its implementation we have further invested in a design tool plug-in to improve functionality in mobile devices in keeping with feedback received from students. Current data shows that students are, on average, logging into Canvas 3 times a week, with an average daily page view of 6 per user. A popular feature to date has been the discussion boards, with an average of 4 discussion topics per module, and evidence of emerging excellent practice in the use of discussion boards to inform and influence classroom activity.

"ICMP has successfully migrated to a new virtual learning environment (VLE) during 2017. Teaching staff use it extensively as a key learning tool and students appreciate access through a mobile application." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

4.2. Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

"An ambitious research agenda aims for teaching and learning to be underpinned by research." (QAA, EO, March 2018)

As a private provider, ICMP has not historically had access to funding through the UK research councils. However, this has not prevented us from developing a culture of scholarly engagement, underpinned by our Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy, with a focus on activity that results in tangible benefits to the student experience. Central to the strategy is our mechanism for disseminating scholarly practice, predominantly through our annual series of Research Seminars, and our Research and Development Conference. The academic year 2017-18 saw the presentation of 20 papers from ICMP faculty on a broad range of topics that impact directly on students, be they specialist areas of the subject curriculum, to matters of wellbeing for musicians, innovations in technology, or the changing face of the music industry. We were also recently host to the three-day 10th International Symposium on the Sociology of Music Education. This was an event with significant international reach, drawing together academics from around the world to discuss issues, practices and perspectives that focus around connecting music learning and other music-related experiences with the lives, values, identities and communities of those involved.

The engagement of students in our research agenda is an important part of our scholarly culture. Seminars and conferences are open to students and 80% of our MA Songwriting students were in attendance at our inaugural Songwriting Education Conference in 2017. We also hold an annual student research symposium to support students making links between what they have heard in conference/seminar presentations and their own studies. Specific research and development projects in 2017-18 included:

- A music production tutor has developed a series of innovative third-party plug-ins for Ableton Live (industry standard digital audio software). These plug-ins have been made freely available to students for beta-testing, allowing them to incorporate newly designed tools into their portfolio of production techniques, with their user-experience informing the next stage of the software development, and the potential to progress to a commercial venture.
- Tutors engaged in a funded collaborative Erasmus+ project between ICMP, the Great Learning Orchestra and the Bellini Conservatoire, Palermo, to establish the opening of a community arts facility housed in a re-purposed warehouse. Our tutors delivered lectures over a period of 3 days at the Conservatoire, alongside school and community performance workshops with under-privileged young people. The project culminated in the performance of a newly devised piece at Magazinno Brancaccio as part of the Manifesta 12 International Festival 2018 and a sustainable future for the community arts venue.

Other recent research and scholarly activity includes the publication of research project findings in relation to music with children with special needs[12]; and securing funding from the Independent Venues Week & Music Venues Trust (using a grant from Arts Council England) to research the experiences of independent music venue owners.[13] ICMP also has an ongoing commitment to supporting its faculty in more traditional forms of academic research activity and publication, especially in areas of popular music pedagogy and practice as evident in our recent publication record.[14]

4.3. Personalised Learning (LE3)

A personalised approach to supporting students is one of our core principles, and the reason for maintaining our small group sizes and high contact hours. Beyond this core delivery model, we also use flexibly designed assessment protocols and additional tutorial/academic support to create a bespoke journey for students, often focusing on their career aspirations. This has been especially important in improving our outcomes for highly skilled employment (an improvement of 19.4 percentage points over three years). On the BA(Hons) Songwriting, for instance, students receive individual and personalised feedback on their developing portfolio of songs on a weekly basis. On the BA(Hons) Music Business programme students are required to make a pitch for their individual business plans, many of which are brought to fruition in the real world following graduation. Examples include Freckleface Music, a successful artist management and publishing company now in its third year of trading, and Dauntless, an innovative collective approach to creative project realisation, podcasting and events management. A number of modules, especially at level 6, require students to design personalised projects based around their own aspirations, creative identity and professional development, and all utilise one-to-one supervision and guidance. We also provide additional 'drop-in' tutorials and sessions at peak assessment times.

Alongside the students' academic programme, we have developed a tutorial curriculum to help students navigate their way through their studies, with a package of academic support and guidance focussed on the key transitions and challenges students face throughout the entirety of the student journey. These include induction and orientation, managing workload and assessment, preparing for assessment activity, understanding and using feedback, accessing digital learning resources, academic writing and study skills, managing the transition between levels, final year assessment pressures, employability and careers, building resilience, and the subtler transitions between modes of learning and levels of criticality. A weekly attendance monitoring process, correlated with additional engagement data around VLE usage and assignment submissions, flags students who may be at risk of non-engagement and interventions are made from programme leaders and tutors. This has helped to improve in-year retention rates, especially at level 4, where we are now seeing an average retention rate of 92% across all programmes and is central to our strategy for improving continuation. The two years of metrics available in the TEF already show how we are closing the gap, at just -1.5 behind benchmark for continuation, and the year-on-year split data showing progress from -2.9 behind benchmark to a marginal +0.3 above. We are also seeing disproportionately positive split TEF metrics for distinct populations of students, with BAME and POLAR Q1/2 students demonstrating more positive indicators that our overall metric. Again, we believe this to be attributable to the personalised approach to supporting student populations that are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes.

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[12] Harris, T. (ed.) (2016) *Valuing Music in Special Needs Settings.* Lincoln: soundLINCS.
[13] Music Venue Trust (2015) *Understanding Small Music Venues.* Music Venue Trust.
[14] Recent affiliated publications include: McGrath, J. (2017) *Samuel Beckett, Repetition and Modern Music.* Oxford: Routledge; Smith, G.D., Moir, Z., Brenan, M. Rambarrab, S. & Lirkman, P. (eds.) (2016) *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music Education*. Abingdon: Routledge; Froelich, H.C. & Smith, G.D. (2016) *Sociology of Music Teachers: Practical Applications*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge; Mantie, R. & Smith, G.D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Music Making and Leisure*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press;

Recent years have also seen a dramatic increase in the number of student requiring specialist support in addition to the academic and tutorial offer:

	AY 15-16	AY 16-17	AY17-18
Students referred for counselling	20	27	48
Disability including mental health and SPLDs	91	133	163
Disability % of total student population	11%	14%	19%

We have committed ourselves to ensuring we can provide the appropriate additional support to those students that require it, and we are proud of the impact this has on our students. The TEF split metrics demonstrate disproportionately positive outcomes for students with a disability, with flags reduced or removed. The TEF metric for students with disability scores 76% for *academic support* against our overall metric of 68%. Continuation is also higher for students with disabilities at 92% against 88% overall, and highly skilled employment is 74% against an overall 70%. We believe this to be a direct result of the interventions we are able to make through our comprehensive student services. These services include:

- A Disability & Wellbeing Team comprising two Disability Advisers and two Mental Health Advisers (registered mental health nurses)
- Two external counselling providers
- An Alexander Technique teacher on site one day a week during term-time
- information and guidance on such subjects as disability and dyslexia
- free dyslexia screenings and referral for a full diagnostic assessment at a significantly reduced rate
- assistance with the DSA application process
- referral to short-term counselling sessions, available to students free of charge
- financial advice including access to hardship funds and homelessness
- direct liaison with NHS primary care teams to support students with a mental health diagnosis as they transition into HE or return to study after a period of disability related ill health
- free access, for students and staff, to 'Big White Wall', the digital mental health and wellbeing community offering 24/7 access to safe, anonymous online support mediated by counsellors 365 days a year
- Disability awareness training provided for staff as one-to-one and/or group sessions

5. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

5.1. Employment and Further Study (SO1)

ICMP's approach to ensuring high levels of progression to employment and further study is multifaceted and relies on the integration of our academic programmes with our Careers and Industry services (see section 5.2 below). However, the starting point for graduate success is their programme of study and we are proud of our consistently good degree outcomes:

Degree Classification	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
First class honours	25%	44%[15]	25%
Upper second-class honours	50%	39%	38%
Lower second class honours	14%	11%	15%
Third class honours	2%	1%	3%
Pass	9%	5%	19%[16]

[15] The peak in First Class awards in 2016/17 is understood to be an anomaly caused by a change to UEL's assessment regulations and classification algorithms. ICMP has no control over the classification of awards, but the data now suggests that this is not a continuing trend.
[16] The rise in the number on non-honours Pass awards is a result of a concerted effort to support struggling level 6 students to achieve the minimum requirement for a Level 6 award. While we want to see this figure

As outlined in section 2.1, ICMP is built on the core principles of ensuring our graduates are 'industry-ready' and supported in achieving their professional aspirations and it is therefore no surprise to us that we perform consistently well against benchmark on the relevant TEF metrics. The three-year splits show continued progress, especially in relation to *highly skilled employment or further study*, which in TEF year 3 is an impressive +14.6 above benchmark. We believe this is directly attributable to our good degree outcomes and affirms that our programmes achieve their goal of preparing students for the industry.

5.2. Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

Alongside the academic programmes, students are supported in making the transition to employment by 'The Hub' – our dedicated Careers and Industry team. The Hub provides a range of services, some embedded within the curriculum and core delivery, and a range of additional opportunities and events. These include:

- One-to-one meetings with students and alumni to discuss artist/talent development and careers advice queries
- Industry networking events including an annual Careers Day, speed networking sessions as well as industry panels
- Monthly A&R one-to-one sessions with representatives of major and indie labels
- Auditions with performers, acts and managers
- Industry guest sessions built into core module delivery
- Employability workshops built into all programmes
- Regularly updated jobs directory and performance opportunities listings
- Dyne Road Development Fund: small scale seed-funding for student projects
- Music Industry Advisory Panel helping guide curriculum development

The services of The Hub are highly valued by our students. Activity in the academic year 2017-18 included 359 one-to-one consultations; 82 students engaging in A&R sessions with major and indie record labels; around 30 industry guests delivering specialist sessions to students including executives from companies such as Sony ATV, Warner Chappell, Polydor, Universal, Atlantic, BBC Radio 1; over 400 jobs and internships advertised; over 200 performance opportunities advertised; 46 students met with Decca Records for auditions; audition opportunities with Declan McKenna, SG Lewis, Will Joseph Cook, The Voice, X-Factor and Aquilo; £1,500 awarded to a total of 11 students for creative and entrepreneurial projects via our Dyne Road Development Fund; our industry liaison executives engaging with the Music Managers Forum, the Association of Independent Music and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services; Music Industry Advisory Panel advising on a range of programme and institutional development.

Overall, we firmly believe that it is the synthesis of our academic provision with our external facing careers and industry service, and the highly personalised approach we have to supporting our students in achieving their aspirations that leads to the success of ICMP graduates. Our recent DLHE outcomes demonstrate this success and have been discussed elsewhere. We have many success story case studies, but some recent examples are as follows:[17]

- Matt Maltese, BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship: *engaged with The Hub for guidance around early career choices, met with Universal at a Hub curated A&R one-to-one session, and subsequently signed publishing deal with them. Signed to Atlantic in 2017 and released debut album Bad Contestant in 2018 to extremely positive reviews.*
- Matt Mason, BA(Hons) Creative Musicianship: *met with The Hub regularly during his study to discuss building profile as session musician. Selected by Red Light Management as drummer for band Haelos after audition organised by Hub in 2016.*

converted to better honours awards over time, a Pass is a preferable prospect for the student than a withdrawal at this late stage of their journey.

[17] Student and alumni success stories are a regular feature of ICMP's website news and events pages.

- Nina Rubesa, BA(Hons) Music Business: *ran student record label Dyne Road Recordings during study in partnership with The Hub and acted as artist liaison on student run festival. Undertook internships at Communion Records, Talent Republic, Wrapped Up Music, CAA, Jaba Music Management and Solar Management alongside study and with mentoring from the The Hub. Founded creative consultancy Dauntless in 2017. Currently working at ATC Management.*
- Gabi King, BMus(Hons) Popular Music Performance: *The Hub approached by Q Prime Management in 2015 to arrange auditions for a drummer for upcoming artist Declan McKenna. Gabi was selected and has subsequently played across the UK, US and Europe.*

6. Statements from the Student Community

"Over my time at ICMP, I have learnt the skills necessary to ignite a professional career in music as a guitar teacher and musician. It's the perfect environment for meeting like-minded contacts and diving into the industry with the support and counsel of tutors at the forefront of innovation. With practical opportunities and diverse academic modules, I have a well rounded knowledge of music performance, its surrounding areas of knowledge and feel confident about entering the industry as a full time practitioner."
Student President, alumni of HNC Music Performance, and student on BMus(Hons) Popular Music Performance

"My three years studying at ICMP were instrumental in my becoming the songwriter and artist that I am today. Not only was the teaching inspiring and valuable, but tutors cared for our development beyond the curriculum, nurturing us always with our specific personal interests at heart. In particular, the knowledge of the music industry that I gained throughout the course has proved invaluable in navigating my way as an emerging artist releasing music for the first time. I found The Hub in particular to be extremely valuable in my artistic and career development outside of the classroom. The Hub team themselves are a great resource, and furthermore, the relevant guests that they have brought in to engage with students have opened huge doors for me. Overall, had I not attended ICMP I would not be in the place artistically that I find myself now, and would recommend my course highly to others."
Former Student President and alumni of BA(Hons) Songwriting